

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for harvesting dermal tissue, comprising:
a housing having a base and at least one side, the base having spaced apart substantially planar forward and rearward portions defining a slot therebetween, wherein the forward base portion is offset higher than the rearward base portion;
a support ramp attached to the housing defining an angle with respect to the base; and
a cutting blade coupled to the support ramp, the cutting blade defining a cutting edge extending through the slot to a depth lower than the forward base portion.
2. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the blade presents an upper surface, further comprising a retaining plate coupled to the upper blade surface.
3. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the blade is in a fixed position relative to the housing.
4. The apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein the blade is attached to the housing.
5. The apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein the housing is molded around the blade.
6. The apparatus as recited in claim 3, further comprising a depth adjustment mechanism operable to adjust the depth of the cutting edge.
7. The apparatus as recited in claim 6, wherein the adjustment mechanism comprises a blade stop coupled to the housing engaging the blade at a location opposite the cutting edge.
8. The apparatus as recited in claim 7, wherein the stop comprises a screw that is threadedly attached to the housing.
9. The apparatus as recited in claim 7, wherein the adjustment mechanism further comprises a retaining member operable to increase and decrease a force biasing the blade against the ramp.
10. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, further comprising a handle attached to the housing.

11. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the handle extends in a direction generally parallel to the cutting edge of the blade.

12. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the ramp defines an angle between 1 and 45 degrees relative to the base.

13. A method for harvesting dermal tissue from a donor dermal surface site, the method comprising the steps of:

contacting the donor site with an apparatus of claim 1 such that the base of the apparatus is generally parallel to the dermal surface and the cutting blade penetrates into the tissue;

oscillating the device forward and backward along a path at the site while moving the apparatus in a direction 90 degrees relative to the oscillation path so that the cutting blade moves into and through the skin at the harvest site until harvested dermal tissue enters into the slot; and

cutting the harvested dermal tissue from the donor site.